

**BY ORDER OF THE  
SUPERINTENDENT**

**HQ UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
ACADEMY INSTRUCTION 36-3526**

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***Personnel***

**USAFA COURSE OF INSTRUCTION**



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This instruction implements AFI 36-3501, *Air Force Academy Operations*, and describes the purpose and structure of the Academy's Course of Instruction (COI). The guidance applies to all Air Force military and civilian personnel assigned to the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) in addition to US Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, and Tenant Unit personnel assigned to USAFA. Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) using Air Force (AF) Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*. Ensure all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication are maintained in accordance with Air Force Manual (AFMAN) 33-363, *Management of Records*, and disposed of in accordance with the Air Force Records Disposition Schedule (RDS) located at <https://www.my.af.mil/afrims/afrims/afrims/rims.cfm>. See Attachment 1 for a glossary of references and supporting information.

**SUMMARY OF CHANGES**

This instruction has been substantially revised and should be thoroughly reviewed.

## Chapter 1

### GENERAL

**1.1. Definition.** The Course of Instruction (COI) at USAFA includes all training, education, and experiential programs, all policies and processes, and curricular, extra-curricular, and mission activities designed in accordance with (IAW) the nineteen specific USAFA Responsibilities, Skills and Knowledge Outcomes and the Commissioning Sources Learning Objectives (AFI 36-2014, *Commissioning Education Program*). Per AFI 36-3501, *Air Force Academy Operations* and *10-U.S.C.9349 (b)*, the Superintendent of USAFA will maintain and implement a COI. The COI will directly support accomplishment of the mission of USAFA.

**1.2. Purpose and Organization.** The COI will be designed to achieve the goals set forth in public law, higher headquarters directives, and accreditation requirements. It will be developed as a single, integrated whole.

1.2.1. The COI will reflect a focus on the mission of USAFA as defined in AFMD 12, *United States Air Force Academy*, development of the Air Force Institutional Competencies listed in Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 1-1, *Leadership and Force Development*, the learning objectives in AFI 36-2014, *Commissioning Education Program*, and the USAFA Outcomes.

1.2.2. The COI will be organized by the principal program areas identified in AFPD 36-35, *United States Air Force Academy*, and USAFAPAM 36-3527, *The Officer Development System: Developing Leaders of Character*. These principal areas will focus on character development, leadership development, an accredited Bachelor of Science degree program, and physical development. The Officer Development System (ODS) will be used to guide cadets, faculty, and staff through this yearly progression using education, training, and experiences as identified in AFMD 12. Character development will be integrated throughout academic, leadership, and physical development education IAW AFI 36-3501. Additionally, the effectiveness of these programs will be assessed in accordance with USAFAI 36-3502, *Institutional Effectiveness*.

**1.3. Integration.** Developing Airmen happens through a deliberate process, one that aims to produce the right capabilities to meet the Air Force's operational needs (AFDD 1-1, *Leadership and Force Development*). USAFA will manage the COI as a single integrated whole to ensure effective synchronization and de-confliction, use of a deliberate building block approach, and maximize synergy gained by reinforcement of goals and objectives across mission partners (MPs). The Superintendent will establish policies to facilitate integration of the COI.

1.3.1. The principal program areas identified in AFPD 36-35 and USAFAPAM 36-3527 are closely interrelated. However, delivery in a compartmentalized manner will greatly diminish the synergistic effects upon cadet development. Therefore, each commander must ensure integration of effort across mission partners, and throughout all principal program areas building on the foundation of character development. While MP boundaries must not constrain development, their separate programs will provide structure to organize cadet development in a systematic way.

1.3.2. Core character and leadership development programs. Within the overall COI there will be a defined and integrated core of leadership and character development programs. All USAFA MPs will contribute to this integrated core through education, training, and experiences as part of their specific graduation requirements of MPs. This developmental program using the aspects of the ODS shall be deliberately designed to ensure all cadets are grounded in the fundamentals of character-based officership.

**1.4. The Officer Development System.** USAFA will use the ODS in all aspects of cadet development. MPs will use the ODS and tailor it to their program to develop officers of character. The ODS provides all members of the Academy constituency a framework and set of strategies to accomplish its mission of building leaders of character based on a development process. This process is further outlined in USAFAPAM 36-3527.

**1.5. Commissioning requirements.** Receiving a commission as a second lieutenant in the United States Air Force is based on an assessment of moral character and ability to serve. AFI 36-2005, *Appointment in Commissioned Grades and Designation and Assignment in Professional Categories-Reserve of the Air Force and United States Air Force*, establishes minimum requirements for receiving a commission and establishes that the Superintendent “appoints and assigns USAFA graduates as second lieutenants in the USAF.” In addition to AFI 36-2005 requirements, USAFA graduation and USAF commissioning standards, although complementary, are separate requirements. USAFA graduation standards are, in many areas, intentionally more rigorous than the minimum USAF commissioning standards. USAFA has the following minimum requirements for commissioning:

- 1.5.1. Satisfactory completion of mandatory elements as outlined in the USAF Academy Curriculum Handbook.
- 1.5.2. Not on any probation as prescribed by mission partner commanders.
- 1.5.3. Meet AFI 36-2905, *Fitness Program*, commissioning fitness standards.

## Chapter 2

### AIR FORCE INSTITUTIONAL COMPETENCIES AND USAFA OUTCOMES

**2.1. Course of Instruction.** The term *Course of Instruction* (COI) is used to describe the cumulative experience of cadets at the Air Force Academy, including its character, leadership, academic and physical development components. While the term itself is new for many, the idea is a familiar one: COI refers to the totality of courses, programs, and experiences provided by the MPs that prepares cadets to become commissioned officers in the Air Force. And while it is certainly the Academy's intent that each cadet excels to the best of his or her ability in the COI, there necessarily must be minimum requirements established by the respective MPs for graduation and commissioning. It is understandable; therefore, that we have come to think of *success* in the COI in terms of levels of performance on the basic metrics used by each of the respective MPs (i.e., Military Performance Assessment, Grade Point Average, Physical Education Average).

**2.2. AF Institutional Competency List.** The term *Course of Instruction* should be understood in terms both of the two purposes it serves: (1) represents the essentially *functional* contributions of the MPs in assuring that graduation requirements are met; and (2) also represents the integrated and cross-functional contributions of the MPs supporting development of the USAF Institutional Competencies through the Commissioning Sources Learning Objectives identified in AFI 36-2014, *Commissioning Education Program*, and the Academy's Outcomes.

**2.3. Outcomes.** The Academy's adoption of Institutional Outcomes creates additional ways of understanding the purpose of the COI. There are nineteen specific Responsibilities, Skills or Knowledge Outcomes, which define *what* the COI should develop in cadets. This is explicitly expressed in the USAFA Strategic Plan. In other words, the Outcomes define the high-level developmental objectives of the COI, *which by their nature are developed through the integrated contributions of the MPs.*

## Chapter 3

### TRAINING, EDUCATION, AND EXPERIENCE INTEGRATION

**3.1. Integration of Effort.** Each of USAFA's MPs brings unique capabilities, which are integrated to achieve the COI. Understandably, these unique capabilities may be more closely aligned with one of the principal program areas more than the others (e.g., the Athletic Department's unique capabilities are most closely aligned with physical development). However, each MP employs their capabilities across the full continuum of learning (education, training, and experience) building on the foundation of character development to support integrated achievement of all principal program areas (academic, leadership, and physical development) comprising the COI.

3.1.1. Education. A developmental curriculum with a deliberately structured core of academic courses (to include courses in the basic sciences, humanities, social sciences, and engineering) supported and synchronized with professional military and physical education programs, etc.

3.1.2. Training. Build skill sets required of an expeditionary Airman and leader of character through hands-on training and repetition.

3.1.3. Experiences. Progressively structured leadership and character focused experiences within and across all USAFA MPs tied directly to and synchronized with education received in core curriculum and training programs.

## Chapter 4

### CADET DEVELOPMENT INTEGRATION ACROSS USAFA

**4.1. General.** Per United States Air Force Academy Mission Directives (USAFAMD), the Director of Athletics, the Commandant of Cadets, the Dean of the Faculty, and the AFA Preparatory School Commander are viewed as "supported commanders" who are primarily focused on one aspect of cadet development, as listed below. In pursuit of USAFA's mission and of the COI, these supported commanders' efforts will be complemented by one or more "supporting commanders," in achieving the vision of the COI. Additionally, each MP has tremendous impact on other MPs in relation to cadet development in the three primary areas of *The Officer Development System* (as defined in USAFAPAM 36-3527):

4.1.1. The **Foundation** is the *why* we are training cadets to become officers of character.

4.1.2. The **USAFA Outcomes** (Responsibilities, Skills and Knowledge) are *what* we expect cadets to have developed upon graduation and commissioning.

4.1.3. The **Process** is *how* we get there—the purpose of this COI.

### **4.2. Supported Commander Relationships.**

4.2.1. Per AFI 36-3501, *Air Force Academy Operations*, the Superintendent is the supported commander for officer of character and leadership development. The importance of character development is central to all mission partner programs and activities. Character and leadership development serves as the foundation for all other programs and functions as a driving force for the development of the Air Force Institutional Competencies through the achievement of the USAFA Outcomes, as well as the graduation and commissioning of officers of character. All MPs act as supporting commanders to facilitate the Superintendent's objectives.

4.2.1.1. Honor Code. A critical characteristic distinguishing a profession from a vocation is the willingness of its members to establish and enforce standards of professional conduct, removing those who fail to meet the standard. The Cadet Honor Code is a statement of intent: "We will not lie, steal, or cheat, nor tolerate among us anyone who does." The code is the foundation upon which each cadet builds a personal concept of professional ethics and a minimum standard of integrity. Living by the code fosters a feeling of mutual trust and respect, which grows throughout a cadet's Academy years and beyond. In addition to the honor code is the honor oath, which adds the following after the code: "Furthermore, I resolve to do my duty and to live honorably, so help me God." This is the oath each cadet recites at the beginning of each academic year.

4.2.1.2. The intent is for cadets to hold both themselves and their peers to this explicit standard of conduct, thus the "toleration clause."

4.2.2. Per USAFAMD 2, *Directorate of Athletics*, the Director of Athletics is the supported commander for physical development of cadets. Supporting commanders will complement USAFA/AD programs to facilitate the Director's objectives.

4.2.3. Per USAFAMD 3, *Commandant of Cadets*, the Commandant of Cadets is the supported commander for developing cadets to be leaders of character. Supporting

commanders will complement USAFA/CW programs to facilitate the Commandant's objectives.

4.2.4. Per USAFAMD 4, *Dean of the Faculty*, the Dean of the Faculty is the supported commander for academic development of cadets. Supporting commanders will complement USAFA/DF programs to facilitate the Dean's objectives.

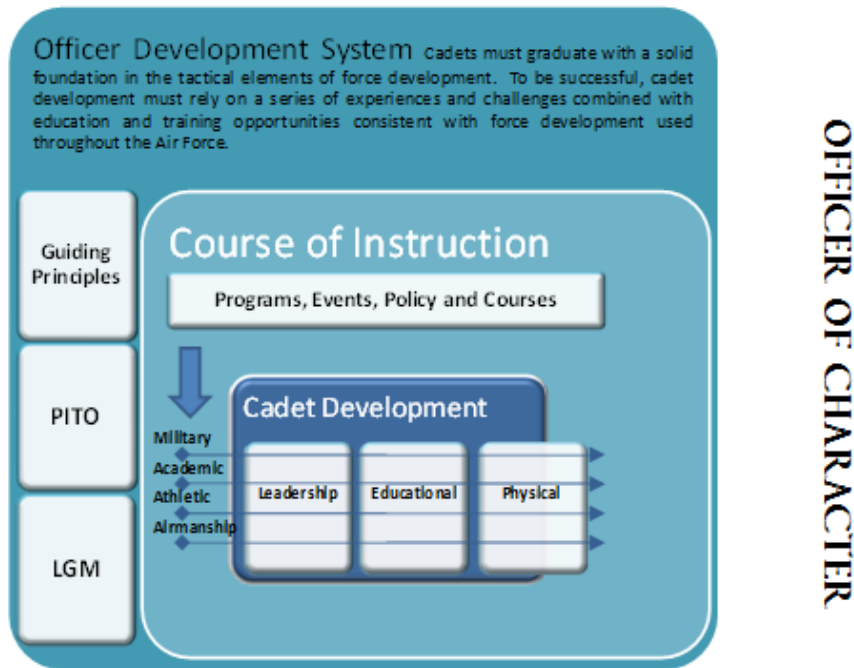
4.2.4.1. The academic curriculum will maintain regional accreditation and result in the award of a Bachelor of Science degree upon completion of graduation requirements.

4.2.4.2. The academic core curriculum will be a carefully chosen and designed collection of courses integrated with the broader COI that are crafted to prepare cadets for outstanding service as Air Force officers.

4.2.5. Per USAFAMD 5, *United States Air Force Academy Preparatory School*, the Preparatory School Commander is the supported commander for academic, physical, character, and leadership development of cadet candidates. Supporting commanders will complement USAFA/PL programs to facilitate the commander's objectives.

4.2.6. The graphic below (Figure 1) shows each MP has a primary role and responsibility for cadet growth in leadership, education, and physical development. Each MP spans across these areas and supports each other in order to graduate and commission officers of character.

**Figure 4.1. Course of Instruction and Integration - by: HQ USAFA/A5D.**



TAMRA L. RANK, Col, USAF  
Vice Superintendent



## Attachment 1

### GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

#### *References*

AFDD 1-1, *Leadership and Force Development*  
 AFI 36-2005, *Appointment in Commissioned Grades and Designation and Assignment in Professional Categories – Reserve of the Air Force and the United States Air Force*  
 AFI 36-2014, *Commissioning Education Program*  
 AFI 36-2905, *Fitness Program*  
 AFI 36-3501, *Air Force Academy Operations*  
 AFMAN 33-363, *Management of Records*  
 AFRD 36-35, *United States Air Force Academy*  
 USAFAI 36-3502, *Institutional Effectiveness*  
 USAFAMD 2, *Directorate of Athletics*  
 USAFAMD 3, *Commandant of Cadets*  
 USAFAMD 4, *Dean of the Faculty*  
 USAFAMD 5, *United States Air Force Academy Preparatory School*  
 USAFAPAM 36-3527, *The Officer Development System: Developing Leaders of Character*  
 United States Air Force Academy Curriculum Handbook

#### *Adopted Forms*

AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*

#### *Abbreviations and Acronyms*

**AFMAN**—Air Force Manual  
**AFMD**—Air Force Mission Directive  
**AFPD**—Air Force Policy Directive  
**COI**—Course of Instruction  
**GPA**—Grade Point Average  
**LGM**—Leadership Growth Model  
**MPs**—Mission Partners  
**MPA**—Military Performance Assessment  
**ODS**—Officer Development System  
**PEA**—Physical Education Average  
**PITO**—Personal, Interpersonal, Teams and Organizational Development Model

**UIF**—Unfavorable Information File

**USAFA**—United States Air Force Academy

**USAFA/AD**—United States Air Force Academy Department of Athletics

**USAFA/CW**—United States Air Force Academy Cadet Wing

**USAFA/DF**—United States Air Force Academy Dean of Faculty

**USAFA/PL**—United States Air Force Academy Preparatory School

### *Terms*

**Cadet Honor Code**— A statement of intent: “We will not lie, steal, or cheat, nor tolerate among us anyone who does.”

**Character**— One’s moral compass; the sum of those qualities of moral excellence which move a person to do the right things despite pressures to the contrary.

**Grade Point Average (GPA)**— Represents the cumulative grade point average for all academic subjects, including military science courses.

**Leadership**— The art and science of motivating, influencing, and directing Airmen to understand and accomplish the Air Force mission. (AFDD1-1)

**Military Performance Assessment (MPA)**— Program designed to provide cadets with specific and meaningful information about their officer development, using LGM each semester providing 360-degree feedback, expectations and assessment using PITO based criteria from all MPs defined by each cadet year’s competencies.

**Mission Partners (MP)**— Strictly defined at USAFA as Department of Athletics, Cadet Wing, Dean of Faculty, 10th Air Base Wing, and USAFA Preparatory School.

**Officer Development System**— Provides all members of the Academy constituency a framework and set of strategies to accomplish our mission of building leaders of character based on a four-year development process using the PITO and LGM models.

**Physical Education Average (PEA)**— Represents the cumulative average of all Physical Education (PE), Physical Fitness Test (PFT), and Aerobic Fitness Test (AFT) grades.